



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

March 27, 1998

S. 231

National Cave and Karst Research Institute Act of 1997

As ordered reported by the House Committee on Resources on March 25, 1998

SUMMARY

S. 231 would direct the National Park Service (NPS) to establish the National Cave and Karst Research Institute in New Mexico. The NPS would be authorized to lease or construct a suitable facility for the institute, and to administer the institute jointly with another public or private organization. The bill would authorize the NPS to expend appropriated funds only to the extent that such spending is matched by nonfederal funds to help establish and operate the institute. Assuming appropriation of the necessary funds, CBO estimates that the federal government would spend about \$5 million over the 1999-2003 period to construct a building for the institute and to begin its research operations.

Enacting the legislation could affect both receipts and direct spending; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures would apply. S. 231 would allow the Department of the Interior to accept gifts and donations (which are recorded as governmental receipts), and the department could spend any amounts received without the need for appropriation action. Because any such receipts and direct spending would likely offset each other, however, we estimate no net budgetary impact for pay-as-you-go purposes.

S. 231 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (UMRA) and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

ESTIMATED COST TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The estimated budgetary impact of S. 231 is shown in the following table. The costs of this legislation fall within budget function 300 (natural resources and the environment).

	By Fiscal Year, in Millions of Dollars					
	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION						
Estimated Authorization Level	0	3	a	a	1	1
Estimated Outlays	0	a	1	2	1	1
a. Less than \$500,000.						

BASIS OF ESTIMATE

Based on information from the NPS, CBO estimates it would cost about \$6 million over several years to construct a building to house the institute. In addition, we estimate that once it is fully operational the institute would cost about \$2 million annually to operate. This estimate assumes that a nonfederal source would provide matching funds to construct and operate the institute and that half of the estimated costs, or about \$5 million over the 1999-2003 period, would be paid for with federal appropriations.

PAY-AS-YOU-GO CONSIDERATIONS

Section 252 of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 sets up pay-as-you-go procedures for legislation affecting direct spending or receipts. Pay-as-you-go procedures would apply to S. 231 because it would authorize the Department of the Interior to accept gifts and donations to carry out the bill, and the department could spend such donations without further appropriation. We expect, however, that receipts from any gifts or donations would be offset by the spending of those funds and thus there would be no net budgetary impact for pay-as-you-go purposes.

ESTIMATED IMPACT ON STATE, LOCAL, AND TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS

S. 231 contains no intergovernmental mandates as defined in UMRA and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments. The legislation would direct that the proposed institute be jointly managed by the NPS and a public or private agency, organization, or institution. It also would require that federal expenditures be matched by equal funds from

nonfederal sources. It is possible that a public agency or institution would choose to participate in this project and provide some matching funds. Any such contribution would be voluntary.

ESTIMATED IMPACT ON THE PRIVATE SECTOR

S. 231 would impose no new private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA.

PREVIOUS CBO ESTIMATE

On June 23, 1997, CBO prepared a cost estimate for S. 231 as ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on June 11, 1997. The two versions of S. 231 are identical, as are the estimated costs, but this estimate assumes that funds would be appropriated in fiscal year 1999, rather than fiscal year 1998.

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